

The Amputated Hand of the Brabo Fountain, Antwerp, Belgium

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Silvius Brabo was a legendary Roman warrior who killed Druon Antigoon.^{1,2} Antigoon had built a fortress along the river Scheldt, now in Belgium, and asked for tolls from the

ships sailing down the river and the people who intended to pass the bridge over the river. Antigoon cut off the hands of the people who did not want to or could not pay the tolls and threw the amputated hands into the river. One day, Silvius Brabo sailed down the river and refused to pay the toll. He defeated the extortionist Antigoon, cut off his hand, and threw it into the river as the same as his deeds.^{1,2}

According to folklore, the name of the city Antwerp (Antwerpen in Flemish, hand werpen in Dutch, hand and wearpan [to throw] in Old English) is originated from the act of Brabo throwing the hand.³

In 1887, Jef Lambeaux sculpted the Brabo Fountain, which has been placed in the front of the City Hall in Antwerp.⁴ The monumental fountain shows that Silvius Brabo has just cut off the hand and is throwing it into the river (→ Fig. 1). Throwing the amputated hand has become a symbol of Antwerp and symbolizes the free waterways.⁴



Fig. 1 Silvius Brabo has just cut off Druon Antigoon's hand and is throwing it in the river Scheldt. (Adapted from Wikipedia under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license, available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Brabofontein_van_Jef_Lambeaux_in_Antwerpen.jpg. Accessed on June 25, 2016).

Conflict of Interest
None.

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